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to move this unpleasant thing. First one bird was asked to undertake this task and tried, but failed; then the *nambok* bird tried for a year and failed; and then the *mong-klyok* bird (? a sort of bul-bul) said that, given a suitable reward, he would change its position. What reward? asked the gods. The bird asked that when the crops were ripe if it were to eat the grain it should not be driven away but should be let feed freely. This was agreed upon and then uttering its cry "*tabék—tabék*" (*abék* means between) it pecked and pecked and eventually moved the vulva to the forehead; there it stuck and then after a time moved slowly to the nose, the upper lip and the chin; at the chin it stuck a year, then travelled slowly down sticking five years at the navel; eventually it got to its proper place where it now is and where it is hidden. Seeing this hidden place Narzong-*nyou* who had invented menstruation so that people could tell when babies were going to be born retransferred the blood thither. As the *tamtoom* (that is the inevitable result) of this deed the Mongklyok bird has a red spot on its tail to this day as can be seen on all birds belonging to this race.'

As opposed to the stories about gods and humans, the stories about animals do not contain any sexual element at all. On the other hand excretion as a humorous situation or a sign of defiance recurs with great regularity. Outside these stories the Lepchas of Zongu do not consider 'natural functions' funny, and there is a complete absence of the cloacal jokes which form the main part of the repertoire of the puritanical missionised Lepchas. The greater number of the animal stories explain the cause of enmity between two species: they usually start by the statement that 'once upon a time the spider and the wasp (for example) set up an *ingzong* relationship,' but then one broke the pact, 'and that is why today wasps and spiders are enemies.' These stories show a great deal of observation, and many of them are extremely elaborated with a variety of comic situations.

iii

The overwhelmingly greater number of Mun ceremonies are performed for the benefit of individuals, households, or geographical groups of households. Even the prophetic possessions, described earlier, are only for the benefit of the household of the Mun and the Mun-less houses near his; and the calendrical harvest rituals, described in the next chapter, have to be performed separately for

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seem, however, to drink quite as much as the others, for as a mark of affection they will take a drink out of the *patyoot* of anybody they like or anybody who invites them. As the drinking continues voices get louder and gestures more vehement and there is a great deal of laughter; most of this laughter arises from obscene remarks which may be *double entente* or may consist merely of the Lepcha monosyllables (they are actually bi-syllables). Occasionally some rather crude and childish practical joke may be played; big leaves or some other incongruous object may be tied on to a man's pigtail while he is not looking, or the skirt of his coat hitched up behind, but these jokes are comparatively rare; the one thing which seems to the Lepchas continually and inexhaustibly funny is sex. There is a certain amount of rough sexual by-play; a young man, or occasionally a young woman, will make a gesture of grabbing at another young man's private parts; this is considered extremely funny. The bolder young men will also try to fondle the breasts of the younger married women but they are usually repulsed extremely roughly; on the whole Lepcha women have rougher and brusquer gestures than the men and it is not uncommon for a woman who is being teased to give her teaser a resounding smack on the face; this is always taken in good part. It is also quite common for a youth to hang on to the back of an older man he is fond of, putting his hands over the older man's shoulder and touching his breasts; with this gesture the youths resume the position of a child being carried on its father's back. I do not think there is any conscious homosexual intention in this behaviour; it is noticeable that it is always the younger man who clings to the back of the older and never the reverse. A somewhat parallel type of behaviour is for oldish boys round about the age of ten or twelve to put their arms round a seated older woman whom they are fond of and apply their face to her dress over the breasts; this is the type of behaviour which is abandoned 'when boys are old enough to learn shame'.

The poorer Lepcha feasts finish at nightfall; if all the provisions are finished then people go home to sleep. But the better feasts continue far into the night, and some go on into the subsequent day; a really good feast, such as the Boom Koor, lasts for three days and three nights. People doze intermittently, wherever they happen to be, but on the whole little sleep is had; under such conditions the Lepchas seem to manage with very little rest, and I have seen people after forty-eight hours almost continuous eating and drinking go off, apparently quite fresh, to work in the Fields.

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527 fields. When feasts go on into the night, and especially at marriage feasts, couples may go away into the forest or to a neighbouring shed; this depends entirely on individual wish and opportunity, and sexual activity is not a necessary or even a particularly common concomitant to a feast; on the other hand sexual conversation and [522] jokes are inevitable and continuous, and in some of the longer feasts practical jokes with a sexual tinge are played: young women set on an old man, strip him naked and chase him round the monastery, and so on; it is nearly always the older men who are made the butts of such pleasantries.

iii

522 831 One of the things which most surprised me about the Lepchas was this constant verbal preoccupation with sex. Whenever a group of men and women were gathered together for any purpose, however solemn or important, every possible remark was given sexual significance. On the whole when there were only members of one sex present, except sometimes among the younger men, or when there were only three or four people present, the conversation was not so indecent, but in mixed groups it was practically continuously so, and each sally was greeted with as hearty laughter as if an entirely novel joke had been made. A certain amount of ingenuity was shown in giving apparently ordinary phrases a sexual meaning (almost any transitive verb could be twisted into a periphrasis for copulation) but apart from this the theme was not embroidered in any way; simply every possible opportunity was seized for mentioning the primary sexual characteristics and copulation.

522 831 842 It is difficult, especially with the English taboos on the anglo-saxon monosyllables, to give any illustrations of these jokes. But the following verbal transcription of an extremely solemn occasion may give some idea of the sort of pleasantries which are the constant accompaniment to Lepcha work and feasts. As has already been [755] described[3] Chala Mandal went to a great deal of expense and trouble to summon from a distant village an old and widely-famed Mun in order to appease the spirit of his first dead wife, so that his lumbago might be cured and he might beget a son. This occasion was for the Mandal, for his two wives, and for the dozen or more other people present one of very great importance. This is the conversation which took place when the Mun was already in the position

[3] See Chapter Eight, p. 231.

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where he was going to pray: the table with the cup filled with strained *chi* and the incense burner already lit was in front of him; the Mandal was seated beside him, with his wives opposite; everything was ready for the ceremony to begin. Before praying the Mun made an, as it were, introductory speech, addressed partly to the Mandal, and partly to the other people present.

The Mun: I'm a very old man, and I found the journey very trying indeed; I was tired and felt I'd like to rest, and —— a girl. I'm really a very old man now; but since you're the Mandal, and this is your house I shall do what I can. When you first sent a messenger with a load of *chi* I said 'No, I cannot go'. But you sent twice and three times and I couldn't resist you. It is true that in rank as Mandal you are above me; but in age you could be my grandson. Just as a small girl is frightened when she sees a big penis and runs away, or as a little boy is frightened when he sees a big vulva, so am I frightened of you. Nevertheless I shall do what I can. I am very sorry for you because although you have had four wives you have got no son. I think this is a source of great worry to you, but what can be done? It is not your fault; you have treated your wives well. It is not a bad deed but misfortune which makes you childless. Were I to say I could do nothing for you, you would be disappointed; shall I do this ceremony and nothing result I shall be ashamed. Nevertheless I will do what I can. You—his wives—you are my sisters and daughters: tell me, my daughters, does this husband of yours treat you badly?

The Mandal: My parents-in-law are very strict with me, and were I to do so they would punish me.

Tafoor: And then you'd take it out of your wives—or put it in —very roughly. (*General laughter*)

The Mandal (while the Mun smears butter on the cup): When I was ill it was discovered that Sabdok *moong* was troubling me, and Hit *rum* was angry, so I sent for you, because you are an old and experienced man. So please be so kind as to sacrifice properly, so that I may be troubled no longer. Please do so, whether my body is cured thereby or not.

The Mun: Were you to die, what would happen to your wives and daughter—women who are all alone?

The Mandal: Don't worry about that; in that case they can go home.

The Mun: I have already said that I am old and weak; if my sacrifice is unsuccessful, don't blame me. I take all you here to

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522 831 842 [781] witness what I have said. (To Ashyok who had fetched him): If I fail in this I'll never dare look at you again. The Mun then began to pray in a loud and clear voice, and the rest listened quietly and almost reverently—an unparalleled situation in my experience of Lepchas. The Mun first mentioned the Mandal's year of birth and *ptso* and then summoned Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to deliver him, and then called on the gods collectively to give the Mandal a son. 'Why is it,' he asked the gods, 'when he has two wives, and there are lots of other girls going about with gaping vulvas, that he has no son?' (*General laughter*) He then sprinkled the *chi* and said to the supernaturals 'Now I am only doing this small ceremony; when I return to my own home the day after to-morrow I shall repeat the ceremony better.' He then announced in his normal voice that he had done all he could and called on Gongyop to take over from him and finish the ceremony.

This ceremony was, I repeat, the most solemn that I witnessed in Lingthem, and the sexual jokes were therefore comparatively rare; also there were no direct invitations or solicitations, such as would occur in more convivial circumstances.

184 522 831 I found this continual harping on the humorous aspects of sexual physiology puzzling, since most Lepchas have a full and adequate sex life, and face sex extremely simply, without guilt or secrecy; but the town Lepchas found it extremely shocking, for the Lepchas of Zongu would make such remarks before their parents or children; a man would not direct such remarks to his mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, or *vice versa*, but he is not very careful as to whether these people are in ear-shot or not. On the grounds of this openness of speech the town Lepchas called the Lepchas of Zongu uncivilised and shameless. I think it is legitimate to call such remarks obscene, since they are avoided in front of relations-in-law and would cause shame if for example they were uttered by a third person in the presence of a son-in-law and mother-in-law, and since the three operative words are always referred to in circumlocutions before a superior. They are certainly relished as obscenities.

522 831 I think one of the reasons for this constant verbal preoccupation with the comic aspects of sex is the fact that at any village gathering or feast the great majority of the people present are, owing to the stringent incest laws, forbidden sexual partners; there is a release from tension in thus jesting about these dangerous subjects, although even in jest direct invitations are not made to people who

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would count as incestuous. Another reason is the cultural concept that there is no temperamental difference between men and women; except that men are usually stronger physically identical standards of behaviour are expected from both sexes; the standards of beauty are identical; except that they may not kill animals nor perform lamaist ceremonies nor own land women suffer under no disability because they are women. With this general conception of the similarity of the two sexes the differences of appearance and function of the primary sexual characteristics becomes even more striking and worthy of comment; and it is worth noting again in this context the extraordinary amount of fantasy about the independent life of the genitalia which occurs in the Lepcha stories. It is also possible that in removing all intense emotion from sexual activity the Lepchas have also destroyed some of the emotional release and psychological satisfaction.

Some of the young men were particularly given to obscenity, particularly Tobgé, a ne'er-do-well whose wife, it will be remembered, was carrying on with Dadool, and Chudo, Tafoor's younger brother. Chudo was twenty-nine, the father of three children, and very fond of his wife. He always gave the impression of being very much younger than his years; he was particularly sweet-tempered, even for a Lepcha, and very industrious, but he was extremely childish, perhaps because his elder brother, Tafoor, was so very learned and responsible. He had rather a grotesque sense of humour and was very fond of imitating lamaist dances, almost parodying them, and of making surprising jokes and unexpected little presents. When he learned I was fond of flowers he used to bring me nearly every day some orchid or other odd flower that he had found in his work travelling about the country-side. If the younger men were more inclined to obscenity so were the elder women, particularly Lumba's first wife, a Mun aged forty-seven, who was completely outrageous and shameless in her speech and behaviour; she was a jolly bawdy old creature, rather in the tradition of Marie Lloyd. As far as my information goes, and on such matters it is very extensive, she was relatively chaste in her private life; nobody repeated any scandal about her. When I talked to women about sex and childbirth and similar subjects the older ones used always to answer quite freely; but occasionally if there was a young woman in the group, she would ask why I talked about such things which made her feel ashamed; if this happened the older women would usually stop the conversation, giving

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831 the impression that they had been caught out in a breach of formal
522 manners to which sensible people did not pay any attention.

834 Young unmarried girls did not on the whole join in these jokes,
522 though they might laugh at them; boys started making them at about the age of fourteen. Girls and young women were very careful about exposing their bodies and often a great deal of fuss went on if a father or husband brought up a girl to have sores on her leg dressed; I think some of the women did feel genuinely distressed at having a stranger touch their legs before witnesses. Grown men were also fairly modest before me, but the younger men and boys were not; if they had torn pants or no pants, and thereby exposed themselves, this was a cause for laughter rather than confusion. On occasion, especially when we first arrived, women would reproach young children for showing their nakedness; this was always done very quietly and in a calm voice without emotion; the warning was often observed for quite two minutes after the woman had spoken. Excessive modesty of speech or action is a great part of the pattern of respectful behaviour, and is enjoined towards parents-in-law and social superiors; except in these situations it is considered a juvenile trait which people grow out of; it is usually given as the chief reason for the difficulty of establishing the marriage of young people on a firm basis. It is a legitimate subject for teasing; and one of the permanent jokes of the younger men was to push the more modest women into my arms, or to tell them that if they wanted really good medicine they should come and visit me late in the evening. A few of the girls seemed really distressed at this behaviour and all attempted to appear bashful; but with many the pretence was not successful.

iv

191 Speech has very great importance for the Lepchas. Indeed,
537 apart from such knowledge as is necessary for the priests of the different religions, it may be said to represent their art, their science, and their intellectual entertainment. To be able to speak well is after being able to work well the highest social commendation. A good speaker is always in demand, and is essential on formal occasions, such as the entertainment of a stranger, or as *bek-bu* in marriage transactions.

195 There are two kinds of excellency in speech; first there is the
537 person with an elegant vocabulary, and second the person with a

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dirt !—and so on. As a child grows up he will completely abandon this language, and older people seem quite honestly to forget it. Rather like English preparatory school slang, these words only have currency during a few years of the life of the individual; they are taught to the young recruits of the childhood-group, and dropped as the child takes his place amongst the grown-ups: they are always in currency but unused and ignored by three-quarters of the population.

A certain number of these plays are sexual; thus the play of marriage always ends in simulated copulation; if the 'bride' is another boy, the children tie their penises together. From about the age of ten children at marriage feasts and similar gatherings are likely to sort themselves into pairs and attempt copulation; there is also a certain amount of mutual masturbation among boys. (Everybody, young and old alike, denied the practice of adolescent masturbation, and since they were perfectly frank on all other questions I have no reason to suppose that they were not telling the truth.) Adult Lepchas consider such sex-play extremely funny, though very childish; far from disapproving of the children, they are more likely to egg them on.

A ten-year-old child should know perfectly well the permissible and forbidden sexual partners in the neighbourhood; there is the general prohibition against sleeping with *num-neu*, and usually also a catalogue of permissible partners. In point of fact there is considerable variation of the age at which the incest barriers are recognised concretely; some nine-year-old children knew their relationship to everybody in the village, while twelve-year-old Ribu, for example, though he knew that he must not sleep with his *num-neu* was quite vague as to what people were actually included in that term. Ribu's ignorance may possibly be explained by the fact that his father was dead; it is essentially the rôle of the father to instruct his son in the rules of incest, and possibly Patek, his seventeen-year-old brother, had not done so.

Although adults never play with children, the children showed great pleasure when I used to play with them, and after I had been in Lingthem about six weeks used to manifest obvious excitement at my arrival, and if I was engaged in something else would do all they could to provoke me to play with them. The chief game that I used to play was to pretend to chase them; I would make one or two menacing steps in their direction, whereupon they would run about a quarter of a mile away, shrieking with laughter, and then

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Men with large penises are considered to give
women more immediate satisfaction, but to be on the whole less fertile; there are, however, some anecdotes told of mothers procuring large-penised lovers to impregnate their daughters when their husbands have been unable to do so. The size and shape of the genitals of the men in the neighbourhood is a common subject for conversation; and such exact anatomical details are known and described that it would seem as though the privacy and secrecy enjoyed after the fire is damped down were by no means absolute.

A couple of Tibetan prostitutes live at Mangan on the other side of the Teesta River to cater for the transitory Tibetan muleteers. A couple of the Lepchas of Lingthem have made use of their services for the fee of one rupee. Kurma said he preferred these women because, in contrast to Lepcha women, they were energetic during the act. The hiring of these women constitutes a display of superfluous wealth and an act of dare-devilry; the Lepchas consider their presence as one of the comic curiosities of the neighbourhood, but think it rather absurd for anybody to pay for sexual intercourse.

It is considered by most Lepchas extremely dangerous to sleep with a menstruating woman; Chala Mandal said that he personally would not be afraid, but the general belief is that the man who does so will be unwell and doltish afterwards for a period that some men put at a week and others at three years. It is a general belief that women are particularly desirous directly after menstruation and a few consider that impregnation is most likely to take place at that time. Old Hlatam the 'poisoner' has even gone so far as to warn her daughters to be particularly careful of that period so as to avoid bastards; but this belief is by no means generally held, and it would seem to be an importation from the Nepali, who, Major Morris says, have turned this belief into a cultural act of faith. During their actual periods girls will tell their lovers that they are unwell, but the great majority pay no attention to the subsequent days. There is also a vague belief that it is possible to foretell conception if the man is especially tired and the woman especially passionate.

Although sexual enjoyment is believed to continue for both sexes up to an advanced old age, the sexual activities of old people are considered rather ludicrous. One of Chudo's most successful and appreciated jokes was his vivid description of the noises he heard nightly coming from the sleeping place of his sixty-nine-year-old 'grandfather' the second Dorjé Lapoon and his seventy-four-year-old bride Pumri; and the first Dorjé Lapoon's attempts at eighty-

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two to *asék* a woman of forty were also considered funny. These two old stalwarts were, however, somewhat exceptional; most Lepchas after the age of seventy abandon all such thoughts and actions. I question whether the generally expressed fear of surviving one's strength into extreme old age is in any way consciously connected with the fear of losing potency.

The Lepchas' attitude towards sex is extremely forth-right and unemotional. They openly equate sexual activity with eating, saying that the one is as natural and as necessary as the other; and they tend to treat both activities as of about equal emotional importance. Sexual activity, unless it forms part of a larger pattern of give-and-take, sets up no social obligations between the two parties; neither is considered to be indebted or especially benefited, and copulation entails no further duties. The Lepcha attitude to a transitory sexual partner is summed up in the Edwardian smoking-room joke: 'Since when does sleeping together constitute a social introduction?' The Lepchas are much occupied with sex; it is the subject of much of their conversation and nearly all their humour; it is regarded as almost as essential as food. Sex is intended to be exclusively sensual and almost impersonal; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal relationships passionately adhered to between sexual partners. If sex becomes emotionally serious it is always a nuisance and, if either of the partners are betrothed or married, it may be disastrous.

iii

The majority of marriages take place in the autumn months after the harvest is gathered; a few, however, take place at other periods, particularly second marriages, which are usually celebrated an exact calendar year after the death of the first spouse. It is necessary to find an auspicious day for the marriage, taking into consideration the birth years of the two contracting parties. Should a relation on either side die on the marriage day it is a bad omen, and signifies either the sterility or early death of the wife.

The groom's family usually spend several months before the date fixed in collecting the necessary food and animals. Just before the marriage date (the number of days before depends on the journey necessary) the groom goes with his *bek-bu* to his bride's house taking with him the hind leg of a pig, a scarf and a rupee as a present for his mother-in-law. On his arrival the sisters and other girl friends

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585 Somebody of the groom's party will convey this information to the Mun in the other room, who will then perform the necessary sacrifices with *chi*, incense, rice, and the chest of an ox.

When this business is dealt with the girl's paternal uncle will say to the representatives of the groom: 'We are giving this girl to the —— *ptso*; if you are not good to her we will take her back and punish you.' The groom's party give elaborate thanks and promise that the bride will be well treated and happy.

585 522 After this there is a considerable hazing of the bride by the two parties, the girl's paternal uncle referring to her in complimentary *tang-bor*, to which the groom's side will retort, if possible making the remarks obscene and derogatory to the bride, who will be sitting with her head hidden in her head-cloth so that it cannot be seen if she is or is not confused. For example, if the girl is older than the groom the girl's uncle may say: 'We are giving you the yolk of this egg which we have peeled for you.' One of the groom's party may reply: 'It is very kind of you, but it seems to us as if this egg has been considerably nibbled at! And we would not be surprised if her pubic hair were not as long as that of Sor *moong*, or in appearance rather like a field of ripe corn!' 'We assure you that the egg has been freshly peeled—just so as to make it easy for you to eat.' 'Well it seems to us the shell has been off a very considerable time!' 'And what does it matter if her pubic hair *is* like a tangled bush? A clever goat can find its way through any bramble. . . .' Pleasantries in this metaphorical vein continue for some time. If the bride is a young girl the *doubles ententes* will be altered to suit the circumstances; thus, if the *tang-bor* about the egg is made an apt reply would be: 'Thank you so much for the new-laid egg; we will eat it very carefully, just a little bit at a time; in that way it will get used to it and like it.'

585 When the teasing of the bride is finished the lamas return; the bride and groom present the Dorjé Lapoon with a plate of rice and then the lamas chant a formal prayer over the couple called *ong-shu-shet*—a prayer for future children.

585 533 535 After this the rest of the day and all the night is given over to feasting and drinking and singing and dancing. Five young women of the groom's family are appointed to carry round the ladles of boiling water to fill the *chi patyoot*, and five older women to refil the *patyoot* with fresh *chi* and give out the food. The songs are mostly improvised, but there are some traditional comic ones; the girl's *bek-bu* almost always sings in a feigned falsetto voice

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Kurma spies on the birth of Apot.

X 159 'When I was about six or seven I spied on a neighbour giving birth to a baby. I did this by standing under the house floor which was made of crossed bamboo; I did it by myself out of curiosity because I wanted to know what an adult woman's vulva looked like, and to see how babies were born. The woman was hanging on to a rope from the ceiling and an older woman squatted behind her and held her breasts; the woman's belt was loosened and from below I had a very good view of her vulva. The woman was groaning and at each groan the vulva rounded and the head of the child could be seen; between groans the vulva was oblong. Finally after a discharge of yellow fluid the baby was born suddenly; and then the after-birth.' (*I put some questions to Kurma about this event; he said he recollected no feelings of disgust or fear; on the contrary, the spectacle was probably exciting. He excuses his conduct by saying he was too young to know shame.*)

Early sexual experience.

X 159 'When I was eight or nine I used to ask the little girls of the
864 neighbourhood to let me see and touch their vulvas; to which they would consent and then lie down. Nobody told me about sex; I knew naturally as everybody does; it is like eating. At the same time I only knew how to do it properly when at the age of ten I saw my elder brother, aged fifteen, lift a girl's legs in the forest.
[833] My first sexual experience was when I was twelve, with a girl of the same age. We were both employed watching animals. I had seen older people and they had urged me to try the girl; she agreed but after one attempt would have no more to do with me. Pulling back the prepuce hurt.'

Practical joke played on Kurma.

X 159 'When I was about ten I was sent to live in a field hut to scare
● 522 away monkeys and other animals from the ripening grain; with me was a young married man, a relation of Passo's. We had grain and pumpkins to eat. The young man played the following trick on me; he told me to get a big leaf from the forest, which I did; then the young man shat on it and told me to fold it up carefully and carry it right away down to the river; I must not put it near a house or in a field. I did as I was told. This happened for

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three days; on the fourth day I said "It is only fair we should take it in turns; I will take yours to-day and you take mine to-morrow." On the morrow I brought a leaf and shat on it and told the other to take it away. He refused, whereupon I said "If you won't throw it away it will stay there." After some argument the other threw it away and did not play tricks on me again.'

Relations with Mother.

'From time to time I used to go home and see Mother and help her and take her presents of the food and things I had saved at Passo's; they were rich, Mother was poor. Passo and his wife dressed me in second-hand clothes and gave me an old knife; they said I did not work well enough and cloth was too expensive to give me new clothes.

'When I was with Passo I was treated very badly, I had to do all the chores and work and was given bad food and no *chi*[7] while they sat at ease and ate and drank all day. When I was eight I was so unhappy that I ran away to my Mother; but she beat me and sent me back to my adopting parents. I ran away again when I was fifteen; this time Mother kept me nine days and then sent me back with a present of a load of *chi*.'

Onset of Padem Rum.

'When I was ten I was sent by Passo together with Cherim and Sanam to my Mother's father to fetch buckwheat. I was meant to carry twenty measures but could only manage fifteen. The two elder men were given *chi* and rice but I was merely given buckwheat cake. On the way home the Padem attacked me; I could not see properly and felt as though my body were being poked with sticks; I kept on thinking of drinking *chi* and eating rice like my companions had. I managed to get home with the buckwheat. My adopting parents did not look any bigger than myself.' (*For three months he was ill with constant derangements of vision.*) 'A chilli looked as big as a melon, a pumpkin looked like an umbrella. At times I felt as though I was flying or sitting on trees, at times my body felt as big as the monastery whereas other people seemed as small as twigs.

[7] Kurma used to get much more easily drunk than other Lepchas of his age, and I wonder whether this is due to the fact that he was not accustomed to *chi* in childhood.

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Amputation of 'ingzong'.

'At Lik I had an "*ingzong*" called Kangbo. Kangbo had his hand crushed under a rock in the jungle and was left for three days before he was found. I was away at the time at Gangtok with Datoop who was doing carpentry work; I was helping him. I returned thirteen days after the accident and found Kangbo in tears from the pain; the whole of the forearm was festering and full of pus and stinking. Kangbo asked me what to do and I suggested cutting the septic arm off. I did not know what to do but just did what I thought best. First of all I tied up the arm very tightly above the elbow; then I put fire on his hand to make sure he was without feeling there and then cut off the arm with my sharp knife.' (*Kurma dwelt on this incident with a very great deal of obvious relish, pointing out on himself exactly how he performed the operation and repeating and repeating the story.*)[15] 'After amputation Kangbo against my advice undid the binding and lost a cupful of blood; he did this because he was in considerable pain. He is alive to-day.'

Kurma has also at different times cut open boils with a sharp knife. Once when he was cleaning cardamum a snake bit his finger; he first of all killed the snake with his knife and then cut open his finger; he still has the scar. He says he has no fear of blood or corpses and would not be frightened to open a corpse; he is rather scornful of the Mandal who was frightened even of the corpses of his wife and parents.

Rape of a little girl.

When Kurma was twenty he raped the girl who is now the wife of Dajou; she was eight or nine at the time. At first he could not get his penis in but was able to by the use of saliva. The girl bled and cried a good deal (*he recounted this with considerable vivacity and relish*); she did not say anything when she went home and recovered completely in ten days; at the end of that period Kurma asked her to sleep with him again and she consented. This girl has since been married nine years; she is childless. There is apparently little slur attached to such an act; if it was witnessed it would merely be a subject for joking; it happens relatively frequently. Kurma says

[15] Kurma has obvious sadistic leanings and dwells on and elaborates all incidents which gratify these; he is badly served in this culture.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

request of his wife: but in order not to frighten her I was given a place behind a screen.

When I arrived I noticed that the altar had already been adorned with a number of small rice *tormos*, which, strangely enough, had been made by a Mun. There were also several bowls filled with parched grain, which had been specially prepared by Tafoor himself. The Nunjimu was dressed in her ordinary clothes, but on her head she wore a thick wreath made from alternate layers of red and white wool. This is called *Peteuk*. She was alone in the room, and was sitting cross-legged on the floor, with her face towards the altar. To one side was a bowl of burning incense, and on the other a bamboo holder filled with *chi*, out of which she drank from time to time. In her left hand she held a bell and in her right the special sacred drum called *Damaru*. This is shaped like a large double egg-cup. Between its faces are attached a pair of pendent leather knobs and a long beaded flap as a handle. When the drum is held by the upper part of the handle and jerked alternately to right and left the knobs strike the faces of the drum. It is often used by Lamas to mark the pauses between different forms of worship.

The Nunjimu started by ringing the bell and playing the drum, slowly at first, with a regular rhythmic beat, at the same time chanting in a low and droning voice. After a time she increased the pace. Nothing happened for over an hour. By now the noise was maddening and reminded me of machine-gun fire: I felt a strong desire to sleep. Suddenly she gave a convulsive shudder and started to work her knees rapidly about. One or two others now came into the room, the Hlaribu amongst them. He paid no attention to what was happening and sat quietly in a corner turning his prayer-wheel. Once or twice Tafoor's wife, with the sick child on her back, came into the room to replenish the drinks, but at no time did she pay any attention to the performance. The Mun Katel was also present. He, however, was no longer sober and dozed with his head sagging down between his feet; "contemplating his anus," was how the others described it.

1 i.e., dough cones.—Analyst

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house, on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters. Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother; but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being fed while they are working they are given a feast on the conclusion of the work.

Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of 313 course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded.

342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

778 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

The bride's *Pi-bo* stands with a ceremonial scarf in one 585
hand and a rupee in the other, and addresses her as follows:

"You have now married into the X clan: now you are bound to its members; and if you have any lovers now is the time to drop them, for in future you should have no such connections outside your new family. In the beginning of all things Tarbong and Komsi originated marriage, and carried out the ceremony as we are doing it to-day. Now are you bound."

As he says these words he places the scarf round the bride's neck and puts the rupee into her joined hands and sits down again. The Mandal now asks the girl the names of her family gods and demons, and what sacrifices should be made to them, although these are, of course, already known to all concerned. Should she remain silent, or reply that she has none, some old man of the bridegroom's village will say to her: "You must not tell lies: we know perfectly well that you must have at least one personal god and demon; so speak up and tell us their names. Moreover, if later on you have any children and they get ill the Mun will certainly be able to find out who their supernaturals are, so you might just as well tell us the names now and be done with it."

If the girl still remains silent her *Aku* or *Ajyong* will reply for her, after which she is formally handed over to the bridegroom, the necessary conversation being carried out by means of somewhat obscene periphrases, of which the following are typical examples:

"Now we hand this egg (i.e. the bride) over to you, so look 585
after it carefully." It sometimes happens that the bride is 522
older than the boy, in which case a suitable reply to the above remark would be: "Very many thanks for the gift: but the egg does not look exactly new-laid."

If the girl is of such an age that it is likely that she has had many lovers someone will probably remark: "She certainly looks a little shop-soiled; and I imagine that her pubic hair is as long as Sor Mung's tresses." To this the correct reply is: "Well, you see, the fact is we have carefully shelled the eggs so

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

585 that it will be all the easier to eat." But to this the retort is:
522 "Yes: quite so. But it is obvious that the egg has not been freshly shelled."

This sort of banter is continued until neither party can think of anything fresh to say. All the time it is going on the bride hangs her head demurely and covers her face with her hands in order to hide her blushes (if any): but since most of the assembled company are by this time distinctly drink-taken, to say the least of it, nobody takes any offence and the whole ceremony is conducted with the utmost good nature.

585 After this a special dish called *Hik zo-kup* is served to the bridal party and the assembled Lamas, should any be present. It consists of eight fowls cooked with rice. In the portion given to the bride there should be one leg which has been cooked complete, with the claws still on. Following this *Mon zo-kup*, which consists of pork and rice, is served: like the previous dish it too is not offered to the general company. While this is going on the presents brought by the bride (the pig's carcass, etc.) are brought in and put down in front of the altar. Now two old men of the bridegroom's village stand up and offer the *Nyom Kyomo*, as the present is called, to the gods. They turn towards the altar and tell the gods that the present has been brought by such-and-such a girl, who has come to live in the house from this time onwards. They then offer the gift in the same manner to the Lamas, who signify their assent by nodding their heads. The *Nyom Kyom* is then taken up and put away in the next room.

A general meal of meat, rice, vegetables, and so on is now served to everybody, including the bride and bridegroom, who both eat out of the same plate on this occasion. By the time it is finished it will probably be already dark, but nobody thinks of going home. Some of the guests continue drinking throughout the night; others fall asleep where they sit. Every square inch of the floor is occupied and the atmosphere is like nothing so much as a London fog: nobody minds.

Early the following morning everyone is roused with *chi*, a

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

While the feasting was going on outside the monastery the actual service was carried on in the main room of the building. To us it appeared to be little more than indiscriminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general laughter; and although a number of old people were present they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away. There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim, where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up. The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

festival in honour of Kinchinjunga, when the Mandal is to be one of the hosts. From the point of view of noise and privacy the two ceremonies were continuous, and there was yet another sleepless night. Most of those who remained behind were completely drunk, the chief occurrence being the stripping of old Dunbyo, who could only just stand, by a bevy of equally tipsy maidens, who chased the old man round and round the monastery in his birthday suit. The lights were put out at about nine o'clock, but I was given to understand that on this occasion the sanctity of the building was not regarded!

Music again commenced at four a.m. and continued throughout the day. Owing to the Mandal being the feast-giver there was a more than usually large attendance; but otherwise the ceremony did not differ from the previous Kinchinjunga festival, which I have already described.

One drunken old woman from Panung, whom I had several times tried unsuccessfully to photograph, was going round lifting her skirts and exposing her person to each of her friends in turn, at the same time simulating the act of copulation: nobody appeared to think there was anything unusual in her conduct. The party ended officially at about seven in the evening; but once again a number of people remained all night in the monastery. This time, however, they were too drunk to make any noise and the night was mercifully quiet. I suppose this is the last of these festivals I shall see.

1st June:

All the camp kit and my surplus baggage has been sent off with the cook to Kalimpong while I, taking only a very light outfit, go up to the Talung Monastery and return thence by the ordinary trade route to Gangtok. It is a relief to have one's belongings reduced again to reasonable proportions. It has not ceased raining for the last three days, and I fear that the Monsoon has already broken. It is really too early in the year to attempt the Talung trip and some of the older

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

114 831 circle, but either alternative seems possible."[110] And Gorer himself writes: "The Lepchas are much occupied with sex; it is the subject to much of their conversation and nearly all [562] their humour; it is regarded as almost as essential as food. Sex is intended to be almost exclusively sensual and almost impersonal; the culture makes no allowance for deep personal relationships passionately adhered to between sexual partners."[111]

In the first place we maintain that the sex instinct, the instinct that prompts a man to propagate his own kind, is a very strong one, natural to all peoples, and the Rong are no exceptions. It cannot be said of them that they are passionate in an extreme manner. The relationship that exists between [562] male and female among all Asiatic peoples is different from that which prevails among the Europeans. The same is true of man and wife within the bond of marriage. The Lepchas are in no way alien to the general Asiatic picture. The method Gorer adopts to demonstrate his theory is wrong. He puts together the love affairs of a few individual Lepchas and with one unwarranted generalization he regards it as the average sexual standard of all Lepchas. Anyone could draw a similar picture of every nationality in the world if one would collect the "Chronique scandaleuse" of separate individuals and present it under the title "Sex Life of the Nation."[111a]

831 831 114 562 Gorer moreover states that the Lepchas believe or pretend to believe that puberty of girls, the development of breasts and menstruation occur only through sexual relationship with a man or a supernatural creature, the Kandu Mung, who is supposed to appear to the girl in order to make her sexually mature. This, of course, would very rarely occur. Most girls about nine or ten years of age would have to be raped. It would appear that the men invented this story to make the women dependent on them, particularly if the female desired puberty to come on. This belief of Gorer however we could not ascertain in the very places where Gorer carried out his research. All the same we were able to check on it

110. op. cit. p. 27.
111. op. cit. p. 332.
111a. G. S. Ghurye, Sexual Behaviour of the American Female, Sociological Bulletin, Bombay 1954, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 158 sq.